

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
Olympia, Washington**

To: Air Ambulance Providers
Ground Ambulance Providers
Managed Care Plans
Regional Administrators
CSO Administrators

Memorandum No. 00-43 MAA
Issued: June 16, 2000
For Information Call:
1-800-562-6188

From: James C. Wilson, Assistant Secretary
Medical Assistance Administration

Subject: Vendor Rate Increase and Policy Changes for Ambulance Services

Effective with dates of service on or after July 1, 2000, the Medical Assistance Administration (MAA) will implement an average two (2.0) percent vendor rate increase for fee-for-service programs, as authorized by the 1999-2001 Appropriations Act.

Based on input from the Washington Ambulance Association (WAA), MAA will implement the following rate changes for ambulance services:

- Air ambulance services will receive a two percent increase across-the board;
- The amount of the vendor rate increase allocated for ground ambulance services will be applied only to the base rate for the first client transported; and
- Most procedure codes for disposable supplies will be eliminated and the expenditures associated with these supplies in the preceding year will be rolled into the base rate for ground ambulance, first client only.

These actions result in an effective average rate increase of 5.6% for ground ambulance base rates, first client only. Rates for all other ground ambulance procedure codes remain unchanged.

Claims for the following procedure codes with dates of service on or after July 1, 2000 will be denied:

<u>Procedure Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
0019A	ECG supplies
0030A	Suction catheters
0033A	Oral airway tubes
0034A	Cardboard splint
0035A	Disposable cervical collar
0036A	Dressings
0037A	Triangular bandage
0038A	OB kit
0039A	Ice packs
0041A	Burn kit
0022A*	Transport incubator

* This equipment must be billed to MAA by the hospital supplying it for use by the neonatal transport team.

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Effective with dates of service on or after July 1, 2000, several other changes are being implemented. These changes are intended to clarify MAA's policy(ies) and/or help expedite claims processing.

These changes include:

- Revision of several code descriptions (e.g., "loaded" miles to make clear mileage is payable only when an eligible client is on board the vehicle);
- Addition of base rate and mileage codes for a third ambulance trip by a client on the same day. The new codes will identify separate trips and facilitate processing of multiple ambulance transport claims for the same client on the same day;
- Addition of a requirement to use modifiers on all ground ambulance procedure codes billed to MAA, except 0013A and 0014A. Currently, modifiers indicating origin and destination are required only for base rates. The new policy requires all services associated with the same ambulance trip to be billed with the same modifier. This will help identify services provided per trip when multiple services are provided on the same day;

(Note: Providers have until September 30, 2000 to reprogram their computer systems for this change. Claims received by MAA with dates of service on or after October 1, 2000 will be denied.)

- Publication of criteria for reimbursement of providers for an extra attendant during an ambulance transport; and
- Assignment of specific procedure codes for ferry tolls in the Puget Sound area and the San Juan Islands, with a maximum allowable rate for Puget Sound.

A revised Ground and Air Ambulance Medical Transportation Billing Instructions, dated July 2000, is included with this packet. It incorporates all the changes mentioned in this memorandum and supersedes all previous MAA ambulance billing instructions.

Please bill MAA your usual and customary charge. Reimbursement will be the lower of the billed charge or the maximum allowable fee.